

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
OC-06 CCO-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 /068 R

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O 020020Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PROP, CASC, ET, US

SUBJECT: EXPULSION OF TWO U.S. CITIZENS AS ALLEGED CIA AGENTS

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1911 AND 1944

1. MORNING OF APRIL 1 DEPARTMENT OFFICER TELEPHONED RICHARD HAMMOND IN DETROIT WHO PROVIDED DETAILED ACCOUNT OF HIS AND CARL HAMILTON'S EXPERIENCE IN ETHIOPIA. BOTH MEN ARE SWIMMING INSTRUCTORS AND PART-TIME REAL ESTATE SALESMEN IN DETROIT. FOLLOWING VISITS IN ISRAEL AND ATHENS THEY WENT TO ETHIOPIA AS TOURISTS TO PURSUE THEIR SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE FALASHAS, ETHIOPIA'S BLACK JEWISH COMMUNITY. ALL THEIR TRAVELS IN ETHIOPIA WERE CAREFULLY ARRANGED THROUGH TRAVEL AGENTS AND THEY MAINTAINED THEY DID NOTHING WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY HAVE DRAWN SUSPICION TO THEM. THEIR ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA WERE AS FOLLOWS:

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MARCH 18: ARRIVED ADDIS FROM ATHENS AND REGISTERED AT HILTON HOTEL FOLLOWING WHICH THEY REGISTERED AT EMBASSY. STAYED IN ADDIS AS TOURISTS UNTIL MARCH 22.

MARCH 22: HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS THROUGH TOURIST BUREAU TO TRAVEL BY BUS TO GONDAR WITH GUIDE BUT WHEN GUIDE

FAILED TO SHOW UP AT HOTEL, HAMMOND AND HAMILTON BOUGHT AIRLINES TICKETS TO GONDAR. THEY WERE MET ON ARRIVAL IN GONDAR BY MANAGER TARAR (SIC) HOTEL. AFTER ARRIVING AT HOTEL AT NOON THEY UNPACKED AND WENT DOWN FOR LUNCH AT 12:30. BACK IN THEIR ROOM AT 2:00 P.M., WHILE BEGINNING A NAP THE MANAGER ASKED THEM TO STEP DOWNSTAIRS TO SIGN SOME PAPERS. HAMILTON THEN WENT DOWNSTAIRS. SHORTLY AFTER MANAGER AGAIN KNOCKED AT DOOR SAYING THAT HAMMOND WOULD ALSO HAVE TO COME TO THE DESK. WHEN HAMMOND GOT DOWNSTAIRS HE FOUND HAMILTON PINNED AGAINST THE WALL BY SOLDIERS WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. THEY WERE THEN TAKEN TO THE POLICE STATION. THEIR ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA WERE WRITTEN DOWN. WHEN THEY REFUSED TO SIGN THE STATEMENT WRITTEN ONLY IN AMHARIC, SAYING THEY COULD NOT READ IT, THE INTERPRETER INSISTED IT CONTAINED ONLY THOSE STATEMENTS WHICH THEY HAD MADE. AT THIS POINT HAMMOND AND HAMILTON FELT THAT IN TENSE CIRCUMSTANCES THEY WOULD BE PRUDENT TO SIGN. THEY WERE THEN TAKEN TO PRISON OVERNIGHT WHERE THEY REMAINED THROUGH THE FOLLOWING DAY. FROM THE BEGINNING THEY DEMANDED TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WHICH WAS DENIED. THEY WERE NOT TOLD WHY THEY WERE ARRESTED. STILL PHOTOS WERE TAKEN OF BOTH MEN.

MARCH 24: HAMMOND SAID THAT BOTH HE AND HAMILTON WERE BRUTALLY TORTURED AT THE PRISON IN GONDAR. WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS "CHINESE HANDCUFFS" WERE APPLIED TO THEIR WRISTS, THEY WERE TRUSSED UP IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSTURE
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AND HUNG UPSIDE DOWN AND BEATEN WITH WHIPS. UNDER THE STRESS OF THIS TORTURE BOTH MEN ADMITTED THAT THEY WERE ETHIOPIANS AND CIA AGENTS INFILTRATED INTO THE COUNTRY TO WORK AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. AT ONE POINT THEY WERE PLACED IN CHAIRS AGAINST THE WALL AND SERIOUSLY FEARED THAT THEY WERE TO BE EXECUTED.

MARCH 25: HAMMOND AND HAMILTON WERE SENT BACK TO ADDIS AT 2:00 P.M. WHERE THEY ARRIVED AT 5:00 P.M. AT THIS POINT THEY WERE TOLD THAT THEY HAD BEEN ARRESTED BECAUSE THEY DID NOT HAVE PROPER PERMITS TO VISIT GONDAR. THEY PROTESTED TO NO AVAIL THAT NEITHER HOTELS NOR TRAVEL AGENTS IN ADDIS THROUGH WHICH THEY HAD MADE THEIR ARRANGEMENTS HAD EVER MENTIONED NECESSITY OF OBTAINING SUCH PERMITS. THEY WERE DETAINED FIRST NIGHT IN ADDIS AT WHAT HAMMOND DESCRIBED AS A PALACE NEAR THE HILTON HOTEL.

MARCH 26: HAMMOND AND HAMILTON WERE MOVED TO A DIFFERENT JAIL, AGAIN DENIED ACCESS TO EMBASSY AND WERE INTERROGATED

BY A MAN WITH A PATCH OF WHITE HAIR BEHIND HIS RIGHT EAR.
THEY REMAINED IN THAT JAIL FOR THREE DAYS.

MARCH 29: THEY WERE FINALLY TOLD THEY WOULD BE DEPORTED
BY PLANE. BOTH STILL AND MOVING PICTURES WERE TAKEN OF
THEM.

MARCH 30: PRIOR TO PUTTING HAMMOND AND HAMILTON ON A
PLANE WITH INSTRUCTIONS THAT THEY NOT BE PERMITTED OFF
BEFORE LONDON, ALL OF THEIR FILM WAS CONFISCATED.

2. HAMMOND GAVE IMPRESSION ON TELEPHONE OF BEING SERIOUS,
INTELLIGENT AND LEVEL-HEADED INDIVIDUAL. HE SAID HE STILL
HAS HEAVY MARKS ON WRIST AS WELL AS SEVERAL "BLOOD CLOTS"
FROM TORTURING. HE WAS VISITING HIS PHYSICIAN ON APRIL 1.

3. DEPARTMENT WILL ATTEMPT TO MAKE DIRECT CONTACT WITH
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HAMMOND AND HAMILTON TO OBTAIN FULL DEPOSITION FROM THEM.
WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THE VERACITY OF ABOVE ACCOUNT
PROVIDED BY HAMMOND.

4. GIVEN THE SERIOUS NATURE OF THE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES
YOU SHOULD PROTEST TO EPMG ON HIGHEST LEVEL FEASIBLE, AT
LEAST MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. YOU SHOULD STRESS
THAT THIS IS THE MOST SERIOUS MISTREATMENT OF AMERICAN
CITIZENS BY ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES TO COME TO OUR KNOW-
LEDGE.

CHRISTOPHER

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